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Research Report

DRAINING THE SWAMP: PREREQUISITES
FOR FUTURE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY
STRATEGY AND FORCE STRUCTURE

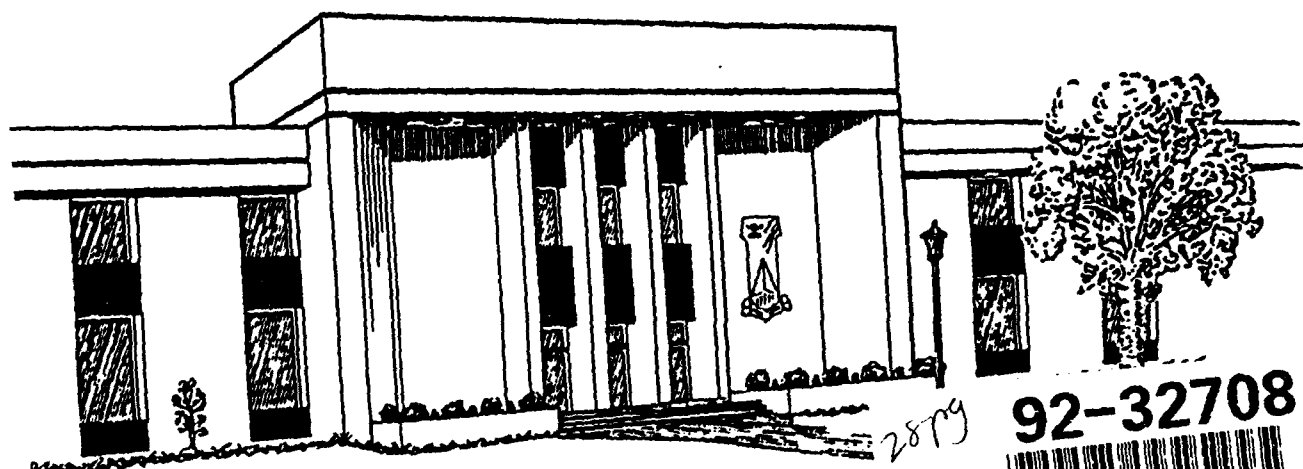
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**DRAINING THE SWAMP: PREREQUISITES FOR FUTURE
U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY AND FORCE STRUCTURE**

by

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Draining the Swamp: Prerequisites for Future U.S. National Security Strategy and Military Force Structure

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Two opposing views have emerged in the current political debate over U.S. military force composition. One advocates downsizing to reduced threats, the other proposes a base force to match regional capabilities. While both approaches have merit, the real issue is framing a consensus of the American pluralistic democracy for U.S. military force employment in the post-cold war world. Military leaders can stimulate the debate by proposing a long range vision and the vital interests for which it is both morally correct and worth the cost to defend with military force.

After discussing current national strategies, this paper proposes an alternative long range vision of a world of decreasing American hegemony where international bodies (i.e United Nations) play increasingly dominant roles in conflict resolution, where resources are more equitably distributed among nation-states, and where military force is primarily applied in a coalition context. Until that state is reached, however, the United States, as the only remaining superpower, will also require military force both unilaterally and in support of standing alliances. A U.S. military consistent with that long range vision would be smaller than the currently proposed base force but still capable of global power projection to a major regional contingency.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Prior to his current duty at the Air War College, Commander Besancon served as Commanding Officer, USS PAUL (FF 1080), deploying to the Mediterranean through the initial phases of Operation Desert Shield followed by counter narcotics patrols in the Caribbean.

Commander Besancon began his career in 1973 through an NROTC commission at Duke University and a Bachelor Degree in Engineering.

His service at sea includes five deployments to the Western Pacific, Indian Ocean, or Persian Gulf, serving successively in USS NIAGARA FALL (AFS 3), USS ELLIOT (DD 967), Destroyer Squadron THIRTY-ONE, and USS BROOKE (FFG 1).

He was graduated with distinction from the Royal Australian Navy Staff College, Sydney Australia, and has served ashore at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, New York, and on the staff of Commander Operational Test and Evaluation Force in Norfolk, Virginia. He is completing the Masters in Public Administration program at Auburn University concurrently with the Air War College studies.

**Draining the Swamp: Prerequisites for Future
U.S. National Security Strategy and Military Force Structure**

After a long and turbulent time, King Arthur, through fortune and force of arms, destroyed or made peace with his enemies...(and then) found the dilemma of all soldiers in tranquility. He could not disband his knights in a world where violence slept uneasily.¹

The Questions of Change

Following the decisive early 1991 victory of U.S. and coalition forces over Iraq in Kuwait and the late 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, geopolitical paradigms of the previous fifty years have all fallen with the Berlin wall. In this vacuum of relative threat quiescence, there rage renewed storms of competition for defense dollars amid the recurrent American post-war ritual of military force down-sizing.

Debate to date has focused on justifying force size by estimating either intentions or capabilities of potential enemies. The Defense Department has opted for a philosophy of paring down forces from counter-Soviet size to a size sufficient to counter the *capabilities* of major regional nation-states, irrespective of those states' intentions toward the U.S. The opposing philosophy, articulated by House Armed Services Committee Chair Les Aspin, calls for creating the new American force from the bottom up based on framing a new threat environment and identifying "those situations or contingencies for which most Americans will want to have a military option."²

While both approaches have merit, two factors imply a different center of gravity in the debate over force size and composition. The real issue first is framing a consensus from a pluralistic American society on the purpose for U.S. military forces (i.e. their reason for being). The second issue is understanding the process of determining that purpose and the role military leaders can play in that process.

The thesis of this paper is that we can develop a better integrated national military strategy and force structure by first focusing on questions of purpose and process before pedaling positions of force size and composition. Traditionally, military leaders have left the determination of vital interests (the "why" we

¹John Steinbeck, The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights. From the Winchester Manuscripts of Thomas Malory and Other Sources, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1976), p. 247.

²Les Aspin, "National Security for the 1990's: Defining a New Basis for the U.S. Military," White Paper presented before the Atlantic Council of the United States January 6, 1992, pg.22.

go to war) to the civilian masters. Military leaders traditionally only advise "how" to go to war. The civilian masters, on the other hand, (principally presidential or congressional actors controlling the defense budget) typically address vital interests in only the most general terms and rarely unravel the ball of string to the core of force structure. Defining those objectives or interests for which American public consensus would support military force as an appropriate option is the linch-pin of strategy. The "base force" structure and composition must depend on what America wants to do. If the debate starts early enough in the election year, "America" will include the pluralistic policy making of interest groups, voters, legislators, candidates, and incumbents who could usher informed choices to the budgetary appropriations table. If the debate is ignored, the politics of the budgetary process will fix force limits through the normal default factors of incrementalism-decrementalism. Before exploring purpose and process further, it may be helpful to review the current articulation of U.S. National Strategy.

The Current Strategies of the United States

The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 requires that both the President's National Security Strategy and the Joint Chiefs' National Military Strategy be formally articulated and submitted to Congress. The White House authored document, National Security Strategy of the United States, fulfills part of this requirement.

The National Security Strategy

The National Security Strategy document presents four "interests," which are simple and general enough to span a pluralistic American democracy. Briefly, they are a commitment to "the survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, ...a healthy and growing U.S. economy, ...vigorous relations with allies," and "a stable and secure world."³

The current strategy, however, does not address earthier specifics of extent, measurement, means, or cost to pursue these objectives. Hidden somewhere in the vagueness of "interests and objectives" are

³National Security Strategy of the United States, August 1991, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), pp. 3-4.

"vital interests." Vital interests presumably are objectives for which we "would not rule out the application of force" to secure or protect.

It appears to be difficult however, to get anyone to *specifically* define "vital interests." Congressman Aspin's tautological definition identifies them as "threats to U.S. interests that are sufficiently important that Americans would consider the use of force to secure them."⁴ A high ranking U.S. Air Force officer, advocating the administration's "capabilities-based" approach, further confused the definition in a recent address to the Air War College by stating America's vital interests are "economic, industrial, social, and political," citing as examples commitment to free trade, AIDS, drug abuse, and the U.S. role as the "world's keeper of the doctrine of human rights."

Congressman Aspin identifies "the new threats" (presumably to vital interests) as the spread of mass destruction weapons, terrorism, and drug trafficking.⁵ Unfortunately, neither discussion is very helpful in specifying the circumstances in which American political leadership would feel compelled to use military force. Such ambiguity clouds the crafting of a derivative military strategy.

The National Military Strategy and The Base Force

In support of the National Strategy, The Joint National Military Strategy advocates: (1) continued strategic and conventional deterrence, (2) forward presence, (3) crisis response, and (4) an ability to reconstitute forces in sufficient time to defend the nation in the event of global war.⁶

Services individually and conjointly derive their marching orders from the National Military Strategy. The Navy, for example, translates the Military Strategy into six broad mission areas: (1) Promoting regional

⁴Les Aspin, "National Security in the 1990's: Defining a New Basis for U.S. Military Forces," White Paper presented before the Atlantic Council of the United States, January 6, 1992, pg. 22.

⁵*Ibid.* pp. 15 - 16.

⁶The National Military Strategy 1992, White Paper promulgated February 1992 by the Chair Joint Chiefs of Staff, pp. 6 - 7.

stability through deployed forward presence of naval forces in international waters..., (2) protecting U.S. citizens and property with non-combatant evacuation operations... and hostage rescues, (3) making a show of force to either establish surveillance, hold potential targets at risk, or maintain a calculated ambiguity in support of foreign policy objectives, (4) protecting sea and air lines of communication, imposing quarantines, or interdicting sea and air traffic, (5) forestalling or responding to terrorist acts, and (6) intervening in conflicts as the forward or enabling element of a joint task force.⁷

Within the National Military Strategy framework the Secretary of Defense has divided U.S. military force into four tailored packages: *Strategic Forces, Atlantic Forces, Pacific Forces, and Contingency Forces*.⁸ There is an uncertain correlation between these groupings and the forces assigned to the Unified Commanders in Chief (CINC's).

The Current Base Force Proposal

Over the next three to five years, the administration proposes reducing current force levels about 25% to a Navy with about 450 ships including 12 aircraft carriers, an Army with 12 active divisions, a Marine Corps with 3 active divisions, and an Air Force with 15 active fighter wing equivalents.⁹ It is important to recognize that the underlying assumptions for the base force provide for the defense of U.S. interests in two concurrent major regional contingencies with sufficient reserves, and they provide for an operating tempo at current levels (i.e three simultaneously deployed carrier battle groups and forward deployed (though fewer) troops in Europe and Korea).

The Navy validated their base force with a computer model which accounted for transit time, maintenance time, on station time, and personnel operating tempo ("perstempo") guidelines while meeting

⁷"The Base Force Navy, Sea Power for a Superpower," OPNAV Force Structure Brief, August 1991.

⁸National Security Strategy of the United States, August 1991, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), p. 31.

⁹John Lancaster, "White House Outlines Vision of New Military," The Washington Post, (January 30, 1992), pp. 1 and 10. Also Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and Congress, February 1992, U.S. Government Printing Office, pp 75-83.

CINC requirements for "continuous" carrier battle group (CVBG)/amphibious ready group (ARG) presence in each of three areas of operation simultaneously.¹⁰ The Army is reassigning the majority of its divisions to the Atlantic and Contingency forces, with the latter configured for rapid deployability.¹¹ The Air Force (to "enhance combat capability and improve peacetime efficiency") has restructured the traditional Strategic Air Command (SAC), Military Airlift Command (MAC), and Tactical Air Command (TAC) into just two integrated commands--Air Combat Command and Air Mobility Command.¹²

Security Strategy and The New World Order

In a departure from past policies of unilateral military actions, the war with Iraq marked a new paradigm of obtaining broad international consensus for the use of force. In the preface to the National Security Strategy, the President said, "I hope that history will record that the Gulf crisis was the crucible of the new world order."¹³

Scholars and politicians continue to expand the meaning of the "New World Order," but with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the current administration has identified *uncertainty* as the principle threat. JCS view potential trouble spots throughout an emerging multi-polar world fragmented by economic, nationalistic, and religious stresses. While some Americans focus on the Middle East as the most pressing trouble spot, former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger reflects historic U.S. "Euro-centrism" by naming the crisis in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet States as most critical to United States interests.¹⁴

¹⁰"Future Environment Briefing" to the OPNAV Executive Steering Committee of August 1991 indicates planning model was independently evaluated by the Government Accounting Office.

¹¹Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and Congress, February 1992, U.S. Government Printing Office, pp 69-71.

¹²*Ibid.* pp 81-82.

¹³National Security Strategy of the United States, August 1991, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), p. v.

¹⁴James Schlesinger, "Leadership in the New World Order," Foreign Policy, 85 (Winter 1991-92), pp. 6 - 12.

The JCS View of the Spectrum of Conflict

The Joint Chiefs describe five generic conflict scenarios: (1) *Peacetime Engagement* (variously described as "low intensity conflict, counterinsurgency or counter-narcotics operations"), (2) *Lesser Regional Contingencies 2,000 nm to 6,000 nm from the United States*, (3) *Major Regional Contingency -- West*, (4) *Major Regional Contingency -- East* (meaning Middle East and Persian Gulf), and (5) *War escalating from a European crisis* (meaning potential for global war).¹⁵

The 1991 JMNA also delineates conflict scenarios versus their probability of occurrence as a basic framework for building force structure.¹⁶ Peacetime actions include forward deployment, counter-narcotics operations, and counter-terrorism operations. The level of violence we could expect in these types of operations is relatively low, while the probability of U.S. forces engaging in these types of activities is relatively high. The JCS broadly describe three additional scenarios in decreasing probability of occurrence and increasing levels of violence and warning time. *Lesser regional contingencies, major regional contingencies, and global war* each require greater numbers of forces.

In the current state of analysis, the world is an uncertain collage of many potential trouble spots. The current strategy does not define American vital interests or objectives in these trouble areas. It merely proposes a base force which doffs its hat to the reduced Soviet threat in Europe while maintaining the global reach and presence of the cold war.

In Search of a Purpose and Process

In this climate of uncertainty, determining what Americans want their armed forces to be able to do is a difficult question because there are significant pressures which tend to obscure the answer. The first such pressure is the historical American tendency to disarm and withdraw in the absence of a threat. Second, democratic nations rarely develop a long term plan for going to war. War is the result of an

¹⁵1991 Joint Military Net Assessment, Government Printing Office, (Washington, D.C.: March 1991), p. 1-5.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

accident, miscalculation, or blunder. Third, it is notoriously difficult to pin down a nation's specific "vital interests", indeed, some hold ambiguity here as useful for national security.

A simple standard for determining vital interests asks two questions. First, is a proposed military action morally correct, and second, is it worth it? The eventual goal of the national military strategy discussion is to size, equip, train, and deploy armed forces to do tasks which (for Americans) are morally imperative and worth the cost.

Because these are essentially value issues, we can never arrive at a solely satisfactory solution through the current national debate which is primarily focused on threats and capabilities. While these approaches have value as a "rational-comprehensive" attempt to define an extremely complex policy area, the fundamental purpose or objectives for U.S. military forces will not be found in a benefit-cost analysis or in a game-theory balance of threats versus capabilities. The purpose will be determined through a political process which is fundamentally a struggle for consensus of values among competing priorities in a pluralistic society. Military leaders can play an active role in the value bargaining by proposing appropriate vital interests and pressing legislators to define what they want their military to be able to do.

The Moral Imperative

The moral imperative for a military strategy is long range vision. How the United States wears the mantle of superpower leadership, depends on how its leaders envision the world in 50 or 100 years. The United States is a relative superpower in an uncertain mix of nation states with varying size, population, power, and wealth, at this point in history, primarily because of its unique ability to project military power to any place on the planet. There are limits, however, to U.S. power, and the choices we make about vital interests, to a large measure, depend on our long term vision (or lack of one).

One vision, for example, might advocate world wide American hegemony, where the United States eventually assimilates or economically colonizes all other independent nation states. Such a view, in fact, has some similarities to those expressed by a recent New York Times article allegedly citing a leaked

classified Defense Planning Guidance draft.¹⁷ This vision would certainly dictate different military forces than a vision of a stateless utopian world under United Nations governance.

In the wake of Desert Storm there is probably a perception that American military forces can defeat any opposing force on the planet any place, any time. While that might be true in a qualified sense, one can easily conjure some exceptionally difficult circumstances to test its veracity (such as seizing a land objective in China). Furthermore, there have been some exceptionally difficult security problems which American military forces, at the height of their power, have been unable to solve. Freeing American citizens held hostage in Lebanon is a case in point. Despite premier intelligence, adept special forces, and overwhelming fire-power, the hostages in Lebanon were freed only after a post Desert Storm shift in the "correlation of forces" in the Islamic world facilitated the extraordinary diplomatic efforts of the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar and his deputy Giandomenico Picco.¹⁸

When, if ever, is it appropriate to use military force to ensure a "healthy and growing U.S. economy?" The United States is relatively less dependent on imported oil than other industrialized nations such as Japan, but is there a degree of economic interconnectedness such that pressure on a trading partner constitutes pressure on U.S. vital interests? What economic trip wires would be so threatening to our way of life that they would justify the use of force? Would oil at \$50/barrel? How about \$100/barrel? Would an emerging Islamic fundamentalist government closing a key strait (such as Malacca) be worth expending American blood to reopen?

The process of postulating tangible targets as vital interests requires public debate to consolidate. Especially since Vietnam, Americans ask hard questions about going to war, and, they ask hard questions about the price of American lives. Desert Storm affirmed "the preferred American way of war,"--a fast, high tech, low casualty, win. Despite the apparent *ex post facto* success of Desert Storm, it is significant to recall that pre-war debate in the U.S. Congress was lively, and the initial vote to support the use of force reflected a bare majority and considerable dissent, even among military leaders. The American public

¹⁷Patrick E. Tyler, "U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop: A One-Superpower World," The New York Times (March 8, 1992), pp 3-7.

¹⁸David Ellis, "Mr. Behind-the-Scenes, Time, (December 16, 1991), p.23.

conscience is notoriously reluctant to risk U.S. blood or offer sustained support unless convinced the cause is worth dying for. We have not had such a cause since World War II. Grenada, Panama, Tripoli, Bekaa Valley, and countless other resorts to force did not have the nation's heart, but they were tolerated because they were relatively quick and their death rate was lower than the U.S. highway fatality rate (or the murder rate in some American cities).

Despite this reticence, since World War II, the United States has shown a proclivity for unilateral action which has not been wholeheartedly shared by even our major allies. In many cases, we aligned ourselves with our ideological opposites for expediency in achieving a common goal because collective security held solidarity against a common aggressor to be more important than ideological purity (e.g. U.S. support for The Shah Pahlavi in Iran or Hafez al-Assad of Syria in Desert Storm). This view has moral pitfalls worth serious situational review to ascertain if the nation's alliance with the lesser evil is worth support of the greater good.

Former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger had six major tests of "fighting for peace," and Philip Crowl posed six questions which provide important bench marks for a Service Chief's advice to National Command Authority on the use of military force.¹⁹ The recent war in Southwest Asia might have fit the Crowl/Weinberger criteria only because the potential for Iraqi petroleum blackmail or nuclear/chemical

¹⁹ Crowl's six questions: (1) What specific national interests and policy objectives are to be served by the proposed military action? (2) Is the national military strategy tailored to meet the national political objectives? (3) What are the limits of military power? (4) What are the alternatives? (5) How strong is the home front? (6) Does today's strategy overlook points of difference and exaggerate points of likeness between past and present? From: Philip A. Crowl, "The Strategist's Short Catechism: Six Questions Without Answers," The Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History, No. 20, October 6, 1977, pp. 1-14.

Weinberger's six major tests: (1) The United States should not commit forces to combat unless the particular engagement...is deemed vital to our national interest... (2) If we decide it is necessary to commit troops... we should do so wholeheartedly, and with a clear intention of winning. (3) ...we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives... (4) ...the relationship between objectives and the forces we have committed... must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariable change during the course of conflict. When they do change, so must our combat requirements... (5) ...before the U.S. commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress... (6) The commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort. From the text of his remarks to the National Press Club, November 28, 1984 as recorded by Caspar Weinberger, Fighting For Peace, Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon, Warner Books, (New York: 1990) pp. 433-434.

threats to Israel were too volatile for the U.S. to tolerate. Though Saddam was "Hitlerized" for American public consumption, liberation of Kuwait was merely an ideological convenience.

Desert Storm, labeled the "NINTENDO" War after the popular video game, was the first war served to the American public "real time." It was an enormously difficult, "high tech" operation, brilliantly executed with astonishingly little loss of coalition force life; but, it seemed so easy that many are concerned that it may have significantly lowered the threshold for American use of force. The moral threshold of *jus ad bellum* (ethical basis for going to war) must be critically re-examined in light of this most recent conflict and in light of the ever ambiguous "vital U.S. interests."

The current vision stresses a "free and independent United States". To what degree, in the global village context, will the United States surrender measures of its sovereignty to the adjudication of international bodies such as the United Nations or the World Court? If the United States feels the need to always be able to "go it alone," then such a position dictates a significantly more powerful military structure than a U.S., which in exchange for a measure of its sovereignty, will only undertake military action in coalition with a consensus of nation states. Deciding up front to forego a measure of sovereignty in exchange for solvency is probably not something Americans have thought much about since World War II. The U.S. could employ military force either as part of an *ad hoc* coalition such as in Desert Storm, or as a result of alliance commitments. In just five major mutual defense treaties, the U.S. is linked to some measure of force employment possibilities with nearly forty countries.²⁰

Is It Worth It?

Costs of using military force may be measured in dollars, deaths or diplomatic good will. For 1992, the "recession" is the electoral battle ground, but even a short review of Desert Storm recalls the criticality of funding to the prosecution of major military operations for the United States. The decade of transition into the twenty-first century suggests a policy of solvency for the United States reminiscent of the Dwight D.

²⁰1991 Joint Military Net Assessment, Government Printing Office, (Washington, D.C.: March 1991), p. 11-1 - 11-2.

Eisenhower presidential commitment to a sound domestic economy and a fiscally responsible government as the inviolable foundation of national security. Such a policy recognizes that the U.S. has only a margin of superpower superiority and is vulnerable to both economic and military coalitions of other countries who might oppose ill-conceived or misunderstood American neo-imperialism or gun boat diplomacy. The United States, despite its status, has power and resource limits.

The critics confuse two forms of insolvency. We are not geopolitically insolvent (in Lippmann's sense) but economically insolvent. The problem in the gulf war was not that we lacked the power to achieve our ends but that we had to beg the money to support that power. And not because the \$6 trillion American economy is inherently incapable of devoting one percent of GNP to securing the safety of its central source of oil, but because our politicians have so overspent themselves and the public so indulged itself that no one is prepared to speak fiscal truth, let alone advocate the spending cuts and higher taxes needed to restore the U.S. government to solvency.²¹

Unfortunately, the defense budget, makes an unsporting target for those who would take the cheap shots. The defense budget is one of the few programs legislators can mangle one item at a time, and is the major non-entitlement fungible area of the federal budget. The 1992 defense budget is 275.2 billion dollars.²² Though this is only 19.6% of the total federal budget (the lowest percentage since before the Korean War), it is 51.5% of total federal *discretionary* spending. Fairly or not, this makes defense a target for cuts. But defense cuts alone don't solve the budget crisis. The entire 1992 defense budget could not eliminate this year's whopping \$400 billion deficit which will be \$140 billion more than last year. Furthermore, it would take more than sixteen years at 1992 defense budget dollar rates to repay the estimated \$4 trillion principle on the national debt.²³ Next year the entire defense budget won't even pay the national debt's interest.

Contrary to popular opinion, there is no "peace dividend;" it's all borrowed money and only a matter of how much less we remain in debt. Defense budget reductions alone will not solve the deficit or cure domestic ills. Relative to the national debt, the defense budget is a paltry premium for "vital interest"

²¹Charles Krauthammer, "The Anti-Superpower Fallacy" The Washington Post (April 10, 1992), p 27.

²²"Where the Money Goes, A Guide To Congress's Spending Choices," Congressional Quarterly Special Report, supplement to volume 49 (December 7, 1991), p. 17.

²³Robert Pear, "'90 Pact Failing," The New York Times (November 4, 1991), p. A1.

insurance against the volatile uncertainty of the post-cold war world.

Costs of Effort

Another way of viewing cost is the amount of effort or expenditure required for a certain return or capability. I would suggest six parameters govern military effort and capability: (1) The time urgency of the required response, (2) The tyranny of distance over which the force must be projected, (3) The criticality of mass to be transported to the area of operations, (4) The value of endurance, (5) The utility of visibility, and (6) The need for versatility. These parameters are not only useful for evaluating the cost of a particular military effort, they also provide a useful grid for evaluating relative suitabilities of various types of military forces (ground, air, naval) for a particular military objective or mission (figure 1 below).

Joint Spectrum of Power Projection Variables
(figure 1)

<u>*Military Unit</u>	<u>CVBG</u>	<u>MEU/MEB</u>	<u>ABN BDE</u>	<u>ARMOR</u>	<u>AF FTR WG</u>
<u>Time</u> (rapidity of response)	fast in theater	fast in theater	fast	slow	fast
<u>Distance</u> (ability to access all parts of globe)	medium	medium	long	long with sea support	long with support
<u>Mass</u> (ability to marshal credible firepower)	medium	medium	light	heavy	light fm CONUS heavy in theater
<u>Endurance</u>	long	long	short	long with support	short fm CONUS long in theater with support
<u>Versatility</u>	high	high	medium	low	medium
<u>Visibility</u>	variable	high	high	highest	high

*Abbreviations: CVBG - Carrier Battle Group, MEU/MEB - Marine Expeditionary Unit/Brigade, ABN BDE - Army Airborne Brigade, ARMOR - Army Tank or Mech Division, AF FTR WG - Air Force Fighter Wing.
CONUS - Continental United States.

Time Urgency

Time urgency is required response speed. Warning time for the majority of peacetime contingencies (non-combatant evacuation, counter terrorism) is normally very short-fused, a matter of only a few days or hours.

The types of U.S. forces suitable for these operations would necessarily be highly trained, already on station, or quickly insertable by air from bases on U.S. territory. Forces currently in being for such operations, include Navy ships and Marine Corps units forward deployed and on station in international waters, Army light airborne brigades coupled with Air Force transport aircraft, long range sea based or land based strike capabilities such as Navy or Air Force bombers or cruise missiles, and special operations forces from all services.

The Tyranny of Distance

If we frame the power projection problem to require sending Desert Storm level forces to a major regional contingency 8,000-12,000 nautical miles from the United States without the benefit of land bases proximate to the conflict area, we see the extreme end of the *tyranny of distance* spectrum. Desert Storm had both superb host nation support and Europe as a major logistics staging area. Currently, extended power projection, though difficult, is within the capabilities of United States military power (albeit at much greater cost of life and lucre than that expended in Desert Storm); such a problem could be compared to an aggravated "Falklands Campaign."

Victorious application of force at such a distance and under such circumstances, given the requisite urgency and national will, would take weeks or months of preparation and a maximum emergency effort, with the United States able to do little else concurrently. Where might the United States have to apply a half a million troops in combat with all support from CONUS by air and sea to an amphibious beach head? Who knows? Too hard? Too expensive? Too risky? Too pointless? Perhaps, but if circumstances preclude use of friendly bases in an area proximate to the conflict, we have an extremely difficult challenge to our center of gravity--American public support for the cost. In remarks to the Naval War College Current

Strategy Forum in June 1991, retired Marine Lieutenant General Philip D. Shutler addressed the question

"How do we go about creating Future Shield?"

In Operation Desert Shield, the term "Shield" referred to protection of political systems and to military protection of the economic resource of the oil fields. As it happened, the infrastructure to receive U.S. and allied forces was in place... No fighting was required to maintain the "shield"... This should not deflect our attention from the urgent requirement to occupy, seize, or create a port and airfield in close proximity and make that area militarily secure as the first step in Future Shield.²⁴

But what about lesser contingencies at comparable distances? The rescue operation "Eastern Exit," which took place on the eve of Desert Storm, is just such an example. This was a non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) of such daring that the movie version will overshadow even the Raid on Entebbe. A U.S. Navy and Marine Corps team from ships at sea plucked 281 diplomatic personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Somalia in the nick of time.

Civil war had reached the Somali capital much faster than anyone predicted. Clearly it was time to leave, but lethal anarchy trapped the Americans in their chancery. Heavy machine gun fire began tearing into the embassy compound. Artillery shells pounded nearby neighborhoods. Armed looters tried to breach the embassy walls. "This was not the distant sound of gunfire," (foreign service officer Karen) Aguilar recalled... "We couldn't save ourselves. Either we were going to get blown away or somebody was going to save us."²⁵

U.S. Navy and Marine Corps expeditionary forces, forward deployed in international waters, pulled off the risky rescue of all diplomats, including British and Soviet Ambassadors, without a single loss of life or injury. In sharp contrast to expectations after the aborted Iranian hostage rescue operation in 1981, the American people would now reasonably expect greater competence from their armed forces. Specifically, they would expect the hand of Uncle Sam to be able to pluck them to safety from any point on the globe in a matter of hours. The point, of course, is that the tyranny of distance imposes special demands on force structure. How many rescues should Americans expect their armed forces to be able to do simultaneously? (A similar Navy-Marine Corps operation had been brewing simultaneously for seven months in the Liberian

²⁴Lieutenant General Philip D. Shutler, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired), "Future Shield/Future Storm," Naval War College Review, 45 (Winter 1992):100.

²⁵Barton Gellman, "Amid Winds of War, Daring U.S. Rescue Got Little Notice," Washington Post, (January 5, 1992), p. 21.

civil war on the other side of Africa). The incisive question, again in another form, is "What do American political leaders expect our armed forces to be able to do?"

The Criticality of Mass and The Value of Endurance

There is a direct correlation between combat fire power and weight. The more combat fire needed in a particular area, the more weight which must be moved within range. Axiomatically, light forces with light punch and short sustainability move quickly by air, while heavy forces with heavy punch and longer endurance move more slowly by sea. While hi-tech may be a force multiplier, there is often no substitute for quantity. Sheer numbers of units (tanks, ships, planes) are often critical to firepower mass or covering force versatility.

Special operations forces and Army airborne forces are light. Army mechanized and armored forces are heavy. Maritime forces (carrier battle groups and Marine Air Ground Task Forces) strike a medium path. These forces have integrated endurance of weeks or months when deployed in international waters. Carrier based aviation and warship based cruise missiles can quickly strike targets within their range and Marines provide quick reaction ground combat. Maritime forces, however, generally would not have the mass, in and of themselves, to defeat a major regional power.

Visibility and Versatility

An important dimension of a nation's military force is its integrated employment with other elements of national policy, specifically in overt, covert, or graduated support of economic or diplomatic initiatives. Visibility addresses the suitability of a particular military instrument (warship, carrier battle group, special operations battalion) by its deployment and presence, to signal intent or resolve in support of national policy.

Versatility addresses the ability to apply or withdraw forces in a graduated, tailored, fashion. Reversibility is also an important dimension of flexibility. Can forces be conveniently withdrawn without adverse impact if the diplomatic situation ameliorates? Maritime forces are relatively versatile and easily "tailor-able" to a wide range of contingencies. They can be visible in close proximity to a trouble spot or

they can withdraw over the horizon. They are extremely useful where national command authority may want to deliberately reserve an ambiguity of intent toward a particular state. In contrast, land based forces, (Army units, Air Force squadrons, and disembarked Marines) when deployed to a troubled area, send a very visible signal of resolve. These forces constitute the proverbial "line in the sand" and are not easily withdrawn without a significant resolution of whatever issue precipitated their deployment.

Counter Proposals and "Prudent Risk"

The previously discussed dimensions of morality and cost for evaluating commitment of military forces are meaningful only in the context of a nation's long range vision of the world. As previously indicated, there is still some ambiguity of meaning for "New World Order." Formulating a vision in open, unclassified debate, must be the foundation of future National Security Strategy. We hear much debate on force structure but little on vision. In this vacuum of vision, I would propose a provisional 21st century view to leaven the debate process. From the present world of widely disparate power and resource distribution among fragmenting nation-states, this modest vision would strategize the reduction of resource inequity and its associated conflict, and move toward increasingly interdependent but still distinct nation states with relatively equal standards of living. Conflicts between states would be resolved in international forums like the United Nations or World Court. If military action is required to protect a state's sovereignty or redress an inequity, it would be done under the consensus command of the world adjudicative organization. That is the vision, perhaps a century from fruition, but with implications for U.S. security policy now.

Specifically, it means the U.S. should support an increasingly active role for the United Nations in conflict resolution, and proportionately decrease its own unilateral military action. Between the present reality and the future vision, however, there is a need to propose prudent risk policies for 10-15 year increments of world social evolution. "Prudent risk" is the valuation mechanism for answering what is morally right and worth the cost for a given increment of time. The spectrum ranges between two extremes. One end is total disarmament without ability to project credible force against anyone anywhere. The other extreme is super-armament and the ability to defeat a coalition of the entire world's nation states in any battle space of the planet. The hyperbole of extremes is useful for punctuating the necessity of

choosing some limits. A developing sense of prudent risk, however, is the expectation among the American people that offshore military action must be executed quickly and at low loss of life to American service members. The *sine qua non* for fulfilling such an expectation is the concept of "overwhelming superiority" of forces to focus against the threat.

My proposed long range vision is not an abdication of the superpower throne. It postulates that true superpower leadership means gradually decreasing U.S. military dominance in the world, measure by measure, as the United Nations or other world bodies demonstrate increasing capability to arbitrate conflict. While the broad interests of the current national security strategy may indeed endure, the United States must consider its military commitment to vital interests in three cases: (1) *Ad hoc* coalition action, (2) Standing alliance driven action, and (3) Unilateral action.

Ad Hoc Coalition Action

The most recent context of U.S. military action was part of an *ad hoc* coalition under United Nations sanction. Most future scenarios of forcible entry into the sovereign territory of another state (not in response to a direct attack on U.S. territory) should fall into this category. Responses to regional aggression, massive human rights abuses, nuclear, biological, or chemical weapon coercion, and counter-terrorist/counter-narcotics operations are examples of "world constable" military actions which should clearly be subordinate to world consensus and coalition. Despite the fact that it was conducted unilaterally, the 1986 "Eldorado Canyon" bombing operation against Libya, if condoned at all, would have been a coalition action under my proposed long range vision. If United Nations' consensus on a particular proposal is unobtainable, then the U.S. should probably consider the military action ill-advised. Some counter that "Coalitions do not grow on trees. They grow on the backs of Superpowers."²⁸ The U.S. must be willing in time, however, to support U.N. coalitions led by another nation's theater CINC. This will support the long term vision of resource and power equity among nation-states, and it will build the independent credibility which the U.N. must acquire to shake its image as U.S. pawn.

²⁸Charles Krauthammer, "The Anti-Superpower Fallacy", The Washington Post (April 10, 1992), p. 27

Coalitions have two advantages--shared cost and moral consensus. The Washington Times estimated the cost of Desert Shield/Desert Storm to be \$50 billion.²⁷ The office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff recently estimated the cost at \$61 billion, of which \$54 billion has been offset by coalition contributions. Coalition forces, while a military nicety, were essential to stave off the insolvency of a large war debt to the American people; and, more importantly, were essential politically to legitimize American actions.

Alliance-Driven Action

A second context defines U.S. military action invoked by the mutual security treaties discussed earlier. While the U.S. is signatory to scores of treaties, few still have credible possibility of drawing America into an alliance driven major regional contingency. How compelling should alliances be? Is it right and worth it to spend American lives to support peace keeping in a spillover of regional conflict from Slovenia to Italy, or Armenia to Turkey? North Korea to South Korea? The Weinberger/Crowl criteria would provide a useful guide to determining whether a military response was morally right and worth the cost. As a matter of general principle (and inference from the Nixon Doctrine), U.S. military force structure should be driven by unilateral requirements and not by alliance commitments. What then, is right and necessary to be able to do on our own?

Unilateral Action

I would submit the United States has six areas of vital interest which could meet the "morally right" and "worth-the-cost" criteria for unilateral defense with military force. These are: (1) The territorial security of the United States, its possessions and its people; (2) The security of U.S. ships and aircraft in international waters and airspace; (3) The security of U.S. economic ventures (e.g. oil platforms) within the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ); (4) The security of U.S. satellites and space craft; (6) The security of trade and travel through free and unimpeded transit of international airspace and waters, including internationally recognized straits and archipelagic sea lanes.

²⁷Rowen Scarborough, "One Year Later...", Washington Times, (January 16, 1991), p. 1.

The driving criteria for base force planning should be the specific presuppositions and requirements for unilateral U.S. military action in support of these vital interests. For the near term, prudent risk dictates the United States must structure and deploy forces to convincingly deter or defend against any attack on U.S. territory, to globally enforce freedom of international sea and air lines of communication, and to protect U.S. citizens in international trade, transit, and diplomacy. Specification of these vital interests does not rule out the unilateral use of military force in other areas. Indeed, a measure of ambiguity is useful. These six areas, however, represent tangible physical valuables with potential for eliciting broad and stable consensus to size a concomitant base force. All other scenarios must compete for consensus in the public forum, on a case by case basis, for moral imperative and cost.

The Emerging Shape of Strategic Nuclear Deterrence

Part of ensuring security for U.S. territory is the continuing issue of strategic deterrence. The START agreement is the current guide for reducing the tens of thousands of nuclear warheads currently distributed between the U.S. and the four former Soviet states to a mere 4000-6000 warheads on either side of the Atlantic.²⁸ If Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan continue to reduce their nuclear arsenal, the United States might revise its nuclear deterrence strategy into a multi-lateral *force de frappe* dissuasion of renegade states, analogous to France's nuclear employment policy. As many as 12 Third World countries now possess ballistic missiles, but some analysts see proliferation of extended range delivery systems as the essence of post-cold war multi-polar expansionism.²⁹ While the world is becoming more dangerous in this regard, dissuasion of such states by means of large nuclear arsenals is a dubious assumption for non-rational actors. A new nuclear deterrence strategy of "minimum sufficiency" would imply reducing ballistic missiles and submarine deployments down to the levels of the French and British.

²⁸Dean Wilkening, "A Future Targeting Doctrine for U.S. Strategic Nuclear Forces," Center for Technical Studies on Security, Energy, and Arms Control, June 18, 1991, p. 21. Also, The Report by the Secretary of Defense to the President and to Congress.

²⁹Robert Pfaltzgraff, Jr., "The Emerging Global Security Environment," ANNALS, AAPSS, 517 (September 1991), pg. 14.

Axiomatically, this must coincide with Russian reductions to those levels also. Concurrent development and deployment of the Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS) is probably essential to avoiding a multi-lateral nuclear arms race. Given the potential delivery threats, however, one must ask if the protection afforded by GPALS is worth the cost of the insurance premium?

Now How Big is Big Enough?

In integrating all these considerations, the concept of "overwhelming superiority" as an imperative to keep casualties low and combat quick, argues against reducing conventional force levels to parity with regional capabilities. "Prudent Risk" is the political measure of "how much is enough," and this issue must be thoroughly aired and publicly debated in a search for consensus. It is a pipe dream to believe that we can arrive at a consensus for base force size by purely rational analysis. The unknowns are too numerous and our political process works on compromise of conflicting interests. Such constraints do not, however, invalidate the attempts at rationalization, and the currently proposed base force is a product of good analysis from a lot of smart people.

An important safety net to the current proposal is the concept of Force Reconstruction. To infuse a modicum of credibility into this policy, DOD and the services must build a detailed data base with each new weapon system's development from research to prototype. It must contain a detailed accounting of materials, time, facilities, manufacturing techniques, and costs to produce and deploy the system. This would provide, at any given time, a reasonable estimate of what it really takes to reconstitute.

The currently proposed base force essentially maintains the *status quo*. Decreasing the defense budget by another \$50 billion below that which has been currently proposed does nothing significant for a domestic budget which is already choking in entitlement payments and debt. Relatively speaking, the cost of the currently proposed base force is a "good deal." The controversy of sizing based on "capabilities" or "threats" is moot, both aspects are germane to a problem which is ultimately political and only partially quantifiable. The key, again, is what America wants to do.

Further reducing the base force (for example, reducing deployable aircraft carriers from 12 to 10 or 9) would clearly limit U.S. ability to prosecute more than one "Major Regional Contingency" simultaneously.

It would also reduce the number of carriers deployed at any one time from three to two. Such a reduction would not truly be a matter of financial constraint, it would be a conscious limiting of U.S. ability to project power unilaterally.

Reducing forces this one additional notch would also clearly signal a move away from a U.S. superpower leadership role as "mercenary world constable." The moral benefits and goodwill such self-restraint might garner from the global community must be weighed against the risk of inability to muster overwhelming force, unilaterally, for our unshared national interests (however nebulous they might seem).

Conclusions

The fundamental problems of national military strategy do not concern how big or small our armed forces should be; they concern what we want our armed forces to do and why. The solution to this fundamental problem is not achievable solely through "rational-comprehensive" techniques. For there to be a valid American answer, the issue must be framed for a pluralistic political valuation process to achieve consensus on what is both morally right and worth the cost.

While military leadership has traditionally shied from *a priori* assertions of moral measures for vital interests, now is the time to stimulate the public discussion with some concrete proposals. In broadest terms, I have proposed a median course for a smaller military force sufficient for a measure of unilateral action in support of a core of vital interests. This single regional contingency capable base force is a "prudent risk" toward a long term vision of international conflict resolution through consensus and military coalition in the world forum of the United Nations.

Though uncertainty is the primary color in the picture of the next decade, there is no reason to assume or tolerate a decline in American capability to protect its vital interests. National security policy decision makers can enhance the consensus building process by draining the swamp which obscures the real issue of determining what America wants to do with its military forces. Trying to focus on force size, without fencing some vital interests within a long term vision, is a futile attempt at alligator control.

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